

Iron County Register

BY ELLI D. ABE.

BRONTOX. MISSOURI.

THE COMING BOY.

The coming woman all have heard about. The coming man may come some day. These things are exhausted—quite worn out—But who has mentioned, pray, the coming boy?

The coming girl, we well may leave alone. She'll be a woman in her pinafore: The coming babe (whose coming we bemoan). Will soon look less advanced, less cultured shores.

But the great boy, the rough, uncut, uncut. Whose ways are ways of rudeness, dirt and noise. Can he be changed or ended? There's the rub: There's not much pliability in boys.

Will he be meek and yielding, low of voice. Complaisant in his little past his teens; At least and functions with his soul's repose. Heard half on fables, half on Boston beans?

Ah! no; thank heaven! the future hath its hope: Our race shall live, and the future has its joy. How'er the faddist would reduce its scope. She can't emancipate the coming boy!

—Roe L. Hendricks, in Chat.

MONTANA BILL.

It was evident that something of uncommon interest had been arranged for the meeting that evening at the headquarters of the Salvation Army in San Francisco. Throughout the large attending crowd the spirit of expectancy moved uneasily, but with muffled voices, its energy stirred not only by direct rays of light from the street, but also by many flowers and foliage plants which hampered the stage.

After some preliminary religious exercises conducted by the brigadier, a woman with a clean face, a clear eye and a coaxing voice, that gentleman made the following speech:

"You doubtless all read at the time of its publication a telegram from Butte, Mont., announcing the distressing experience of our brave little sister, Cadet Annie Smith, who was so great a favorite with her before she was assigned to duty at Butte."

There was an amused twinkle in the brigadier's eyes, but in the audience there was a spreading titter.

"Well," resumed the brigadier, "our noble little sister, with the help of God, passed through the ordeal, as most of you are aware, but as it is a part of our plan to confess publicly our errors and shortcomings, I will ask Cadet Smith to give you a true and full account of what happened to her at Butte."

A faint clapping of hands, a vociferous "God bless Cadet Smith!" here and there and a removal of the wings of the spirit of expectancy greeted the ascent to the platform of a small, little young figure arrayed in the somber blue and quail poke bonnet of the army. Her face was a glowing crimson as she faced the audience, but her eyes were bright and her glance was firm, and the vigor of a strong and sturdy soul lent a certain grace of freedom to her pose.

"After I had served several months selling War Crys in San Francisco," she began with a steady voice which had acquired that plaintive quality so common among the hard workers in the cause, "I was sent to Butte, where there was a small corps of workers. They had become discouraged, and it was thought that my experience would help them a little. I didn't know that Butte was so different from San Francisco, and the members of the corps there didn't know it either, because they had never worked anywhere else. That is why they didn't tell me some things that I wish I had known more about."

"I started out the first day with about two hundred War Crys. They looked surprised at the corps headquarters when I asked for so many, but I thought I could sell them."

"Of course I went into the hardest part of town, and after I had visited one or two saloons and failed to sell a copy I went into another one. A good many men were gambling, I had never seen anything but card playing in San Francisco, but they had wheels of fortune and a great many other things to gamble with. Several men were drinking at the bar. I went among them all and asked them to buy the paper, but they simply stared at me in wonder. The games began to stop, and then a big, fine-looking man with a broad-brimmed hat came up to me and said—and he said—he said: 'Hello, little Parson Sally, what do you want?'

He said it just like that. He was so big and his voice was so deep—and—and he was so—"

"Out with it, cadet!" cried half a dozen voices in the audience, and the girl broke down, stammering and blushing.

"Handsome!" she added, desperately, as though the saying of the word was a cross between martyrdom and the confession of a mortal sin. Great applause and laughter followed this declaration, which, on the occasion of the first time, she had never heard before.

"The handsome!" This so overwhelmed the girl that her lips trembled and tears sprang to her eyes and she cast a despairing, appealing glance toward one particular spot before her in the audience where she had not had the courage to look before. That single look was sufficient to rive the bonds of decorum which had held a giant in restraint, and the uprising of a towering frame sent the brigadier's programme and discipline tumbling into chaos. The tall man approached and mounted the platform with the side of a grenadier, while Cadet Annie gazed at him with a dismay which was still inefficient to quench the light of the stars that shone all the brighter in her eyes now that her cheeks had paled. Simultaneously a startled hush fell upon the audience for, although in a familiar uniform of the Salvation Army sat upon the man's splendid frame, he was a stranger to all and there was a commanding air about him that stilled all sounds.

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"My friends," he said, "with God's help and the brigadier's consent—I can't never tell the trouble to secure it seems too late for this poor child to tell what happened to her in the gambling house at Butte that day. I was there when it happened and saw it all, and I will tell you the story. I can't bear to see her tortured as she has been this night. Cadet Annie Smith, tell us."

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"He was running a faro game in the Montana jobbery house, and he was the door open and this little girl drifted in. The fellows wasn't used to the way she went after 'em. She just waded right in and tackled 'em, and them blue eyes that she carried in her head looked straight at 'em and through 'em, as much as to say: 'I think you're a real decent fellow if you'd read the War Cry, quit gambling, quit drinking gin and have respect for good women.' That's what the fellows told me her eyes said to 'em."

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"He was running a faro game in the Montana jobbery house, and he was the door open and this little girl drifted in. The fellows wasn't used to the way she went after 'em. She just waded right in and tackled 'em, and them blue eyes that she carried in her head looked straight at 'em and through 'em, as much as to say: 'I think you're a real decent fellow if you'd read the War Cry, quit gambling, quit drinking gin and have respect for good women.' That's what the fellows told me her eyes said to 'em."

"Then the big gambler she started to tell you about come up and says to her: 'Hello, little Parson Sally, what do you want?' 'I want to sell you a War Cry,' she says. 'A what?' says he. 'A War Cry,' she says; and her calm blue eyes looked him through and through. 'A War Cry?' says he. 'What's that?' he asked her as well as she did what it was."

"After badgering her that way and not making her lose an inch of ground, he told her he'd make a proposition by which she might sell him all the War Crys she had. The poor little thing said to him, and her eyes got so bright, and she asked him what the proposition was. He had her sit down at a card table, and he took three cards—a king and two spot cards—and shuffled 'em on the table so that she could see the king while he was shuffling 'em, and then asked her if she could give him the king and the two spot cards lay face down, alongside one another, on the table. She said of course she would. He says to her: 'Try it.' She done so, and of course she picked out the king."

"He says: 'That's smart, and I didn't think you'd do it. Now I'll tell you what I'll do: I'll shuffle the cards, and every time you pick out the king I'll buy two War Crys. Every time you pick out a spot card you are to give me a War Cry for nothing.' She agreed to that."

"The poor child didn't know that she was gambling—didn't know that she was tackling the notorious Montana Bill in his particular specialty—didn't know that she had run up against the slickest three-card monte thrower in the whole northwest."

"Well, you know what happened. Bill Cray she had and then laughed at her. I saw her as she sat there, and I saw how she looked when she began to realize that she had lost all her papers and didn't have a cent to show for 'em; I saw how white she got, and how she looked when she saw the king through her body; I saw how she knifed up and looked around at the laughing men, like a lamb cornered by a pack of wolves; I saw her try hard to keep down the tears, and then she says: 'Men, I will pray to God to lead you all into better lives. And when you were here, but they had wheels of fortune and a great many other things to gamble with. Several men were drinking at the bar. I went among them all and asked them to buy the paper, but they simply stared at me in wonder. The games began to stop, and then a big, fine-looking man with a broad-brimmed hat came up to me and said—and he said—he said: 'Hello, little Parson Sally, what do you want?'

He said it just like that. He was so big and his voice was so deep—and—and he was so—"

"Out with it, cadet!" cried half a dozen voices in the audience, and the girl broke down, stammering and blushing.

"Handsome!" she added, desperately, as though the saying of the word was a cross between martyrdom and the confession of a mortal sin. Great applause and laughter followed this declaration, which, on the occasion of the first time, she had never heard before.

"The handsome!" This so overwhelmed the girl that her lips trembled and tears sprang to her eyes and she cast a despairing, appealing glance toward one particular spot before her in the audience where she had not had the courage to look before. That single look was sufficient to rive the bonds of decorum which had held a giant in restraint, and the uprising of a towering frame sent the brigadier's programme and discipline tumbling into chaos. The tall man approached and mounted the platform with the side of a grenadier, while Cadet Annie gazed at him with a dismay which was still inefficient to quench the light of the stars that shone all the brighter in her eyes now that her cheeks had paled. Simultaneously a startled hush fell upon the audience for, although in a familiar uniform of the Salvation Army sat upon the man's splendid frame, he was a stranger to all and there was a commanding air about him that stilled all sounds.

He stalked to the girl's side and stood there facing the big crowd like a lion at bay in defense of his kingdom. And an unconscious hand on his arm was with every face, jet black wavy hair worn long, and formidable black mustache and imperial. These two made a strange picture as they stood side by side, so small and seemingly so frail, he so tall and muscular and competent; she looking at him, he ignoring her and sweeping the hall with a glance half of defiance, half of benignity and wholly of

strength and mastery. When the man spoke his voice rolled forth in those rounded billows that in a rich diapason sing the mysteries of the deep.

"My friends," he said, "with God's help and the brigadier's consent—I can't never tell the trouble to secure it seems too late for this poor child to tell what happened to her in the gambling house at Butte that day. I was there when it happened and saw it all, and I will tell you the story. I can't bear to see her tortured as she has been this night. Cadet Annie Smith, tell us."

He said that still without looking at her. With a glance at the brigadier which meant: "How can I help it when this big thing shoulders me away?" she slipped behind the rose embankment and the embowering foliage plants on the stage and was lost to view.

The brigadier sat watching the man with a peculiar expression which no one could have understood had anyone thought to observe it, but the stranger so completely filled all eyes and so impressed his masterly personality on the consciousness of all who could see and hear that nothing else could be observed. The stranger resumed:

"I knowed the gambler that played it low down on this brave little Salvation Army lassie that day—knowed him